

[Interview with Vito Cacciola #25]

ORIGINAL MSS. OR FIELD NOTES (Check one)

PUB Living Lore in New England

TITLE Italian Cobbler - Beverly - #25 (M. R. Lovett)

DATE 2/13/39 WDS. PP. 6

CHECKER DATE

SOURCES GIVEN (?) Interview with Vito Cacciola

COMMENTS

[???] Paper No. 25

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INTERVIEW

with

VITO CACCIOLA

. . . .

by

Merton R. Lovett

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“As well as remembered ”

. . . .

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. . .

(from memory)

“Some peoples has no honesty. They cheata the workers; they cheata de boss; they cheata their mother; they try foola the good Lord. Sometime, I think, they only cheata themself.

“My brother Peter wasa always honest. Today he would hava good job, if liar and thief did not maka funny business.

“O.K. Mr. Lovett, I tella you de story. Peter went to worka for Mrs. Emory in 1934. She wanta someone to grow de flowers good.

“Peter made a fine job with de orchids. Next year he winna many prizes at flower show. De mistress was mucha pleased. She lova de flowers.

“Every day Peter picka lovely boquets for de biga house. He maka bunches of roses, chrysanthimums, lillies, carnations, jonquils. In de winter, each day he send de flowers to Boston house.

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"She say, 'Peter, you is artist with flowers. I am interest-ed. Tella me how you maka them so pretty and so fragrant.'

"Most every day she visit de garden and de greenhouse. She asks lots of question. She say, 'How you do this? Why you do that? When shall de gladioli blossom? Will we put dahlias in de show?'

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"Everyting wasa fine. But de superintendent of that estate was a bad man. He sas gangster and thief. He geta good salary. But was he satisfi-ed? No, he musta steal from his kind employer.

"His name was McKenzie. His nationality was de Canadian. His home wasa Nova Scotia. He was all de time maka de graft. From de grocerymans he getta cut. Same from de milkmans and de garage.

"When he see de mistress wasa pleas-ed with Peter, he getta jealous. He coma see Peter and say, 'Peter, you is ignorant about de ways of rich people. You shoulda not talk with them.'

"But Peter reply, 'De mistress, she aska me many questions. Whata I do? Shall I not maka insult if I do not answer her?'

"No,' say de Superintendent, 'she think mucha more of you if you does nota talk. For her it will mean mucha respect. De richa folks thinka it is evil manners for de help to talk.'

"Was Peter deceiv-ed? You bet you my life he were not. He had work-ed many years for de nobility at Beverly Farms. Peter knew dis man was try to maka fool of him. So he convers-ed often with de good lady.

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"Bye and bye, Peter see how bigga a thief that Canadian was. He seea de bills for garden. For de shovel de bill say 3 \$2.50, for de rake \$2,00. By jingo, they pay two times too many for everything.

"Yes, he was great grafter. But yet you knowa nothing. De mistress she coma greenhouse, with a bill and say, 'You is going to getta some very rarest bulbs. They will be of then 500 and they costs \$300. Mr. McKenzie orders them. If you maka care with them, I will hava lovliest flowers than Mrs. Moore. I hopa you will be with them most particular, Peter.'

"What do you supposa? You's a right. When de lilly bulbs arrive. they was justa 100 and they was smaller like marbles. Peter tella de 'Superintendent, he think someone makes big mistake. But 'that crooker maka answer, 'It is all righta, Peter. It is de gooda business. For this deal we will rake up \$200. For your share I will giva you fifty.'

"Peter, he was enrag-ed. He declara he was honest man and never would he taka part in stealery.

"De bad mans, he say, 'Peter, you is foolish and green like grass. De old lady hava mucha money. To losa some she would not miss it. You is lucky to worka with smart guy like me.'

"But Peter he refus-ed with firmness. He say, 'Any 4 peoples who would steala from de good mistress was lower down than snake's belly.' He has harda time to keep his temper. In his hand he holda spraying gun. Much he was tempted to wet that thief with de poison.

"I thinka that would be good thing to do, does you not, Mr. Lovett? But Peter did not wisha to lose de job.

"And that crooker maka threats to him. He shouta, 'Keep your mouth shut or there will be missa one more Wop! Perhaps I will tella de old lady that you steal-ed de bulbs. Hah! Hah! Peter, who will she think tella de truth? Should you staya here, you must play in with me. Does you knowa which side de butter your bread is on?'

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"Well, I tella you. Peter talka with his wife. They lives in pretty house over garage. He say he's going to tella Mrs. Emory. But she beg-ed him to proceed with care. She ask-ed Peter to wait. Sometime, if Mr. McKenzie get too mucha rope he would hanga himself.

"No, that grafter do nothing but steala some more. Two, three times each week he taka flier to de horse race. One time he borrow fifty dollars from Peter.

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"I'm coma to point soon. In fall de Superintendent say, 'Peter, de work here is now little. De old lady has mov-ed to Boston. Woulda you like to take for yourself a vacation? You will losa no pay.'

"Peter, he was mucha pleas-ed. For long time he wanta visit Sicily. His fader wasa very old and sick. So he maka this reply.

"Then that gangster, he maka smile, and say, 'All righta Peter, that is nica. For eight weeks you can hava de vacation. I tella de old lady. She will be glada, cause you has been so much success with flowers.

"Yes, Peter goes to Sicily. He is there two weeks. De fader in mucha happy. 'Then one day when he is walka on de mountains, a boy runna to him and say de telegram does come. Peter hurries home and reada it.

"You shall know. De words make him sick. They say, 'Shipment of orchids arrived last week. You was absent. Have hired new hot-house man.'

"Yes, was it not? It was all de trick. Never was such a [gangster?]. He wasa worse than de Judas.

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“No, Mrs. Emory did not understand. That thief told her lies. He saya Peter promis-ed to coma back in four weeks. Peter senda her a letter. She maka de answer and saya she was sorry. She believe him, but now she could not a fire de new man.

But she sends him a nice reccomend. Wait justa minute I showa it to you.

“And that crooker. He did hanga himself. When de Mistress builda some more on house he steal-ad much. His sin was discover-ed. Now he digga de sewer on de D.P.A. I think he is serv-ed right. What do you thinka, Mr. Lovett?”